

Interview (#2) with Phil Schwind
in Eastham, Massachusetts

by Vivian Andrist
December 5, 1981

Q: We're going to pick up where you became Shellfish Constable.
What were the years that you served as that and how did it come
about?

PS: Why do you ask me years? Years go by so fast. I retired
five years ago. That would make it 1976, and I started ten years
before that, so that would be 1966.

And the reason I asked for the job of Shellfish Constable was
that I had gotten tired of the rat race in Cape Cod Bay, particularly
on Sundays, charterboat fishing. I felt that I had reached a
dead end there, and Lloyd Mayo, who was at that time Shellfish
Constable, wanted out. At that time the job paid a thousand dollars
a year. And I went to the Finance Committee and they said, you
can't live on a thousand dollars a year, and I said, I have no
intention of trying. Let me have the job for a year. I will give
up Saturdays and Sundays in the Bay and do what Lloyd has been
doing, and at the end of the year I'll come back and I will say
how much money I want.

So at the end of the year I came back and I said, it's a part-time job, it's not a full-time job. I want three thousand dollars for salary. I also want five thousand dollars for propagation and protection and the rest of the things. Now this is pretty radical, because we're jumping the budget now from eighteen hundred dollars a year to eight thousand dollars a year. And I'm very, very happy about the thing, that the town never bucked me, they never argued. I went to Town Meeting and asked for eight thousand dollars that first year. Charlie Campbell, who had worked for Lloyd as a deputy for I don't know how many years-- twelve years, I guess, before I took over-- had been getting three hundred dollars a year. They raised Charlie's salary to five hundred dollars a year. They gave me three thousand dollars a year as Shellfish Officer. This is part-time. This is half-time.

However, I did get on the town's payroll as an employee, and the sad part of it is that if you work nineteen hours a week for the town, you don't benefit from the pension. If you work twenty hours a week, then you do get a pension and all the rest of the benefits go with it.

I held the job for ten years and in the ten years I jumped the budget from eighteen hundred dollars to twenty thousand dollars a year. But we set up what I fondly call a cat farm situation, where the man who raised cats for their skins, after he had skun them, threw the carcasses over the fence. This drew rats and from then on the rats ate the cats and the cats ate the rats and he got the skins for nothing.

This cat farm thing is-- the point is that the year that I got twenty thousand dollars for a shellfish budget, we took in nineteen thousand, three hundred dollars on licenses. So that actually the entire shellfish-- the very much expanded shellfish budget-- did not cost the town anything. In fact, it cost the town less than it had, because we were selling licenses to the seven thousand people a year who took shellfish out of town. And the thing has grown-- the project has grown to the point where now it is not uncommon for there to be six hundred people in the Salt Pond on a Sunday and take out as much as two tons, four thousand pounds of shellfish, in four hours on a Sunday. And it still doesn't cost the town anything, because the licenses pay for it.

Now I've said my say about the shellfish business.

Q: Okay, except you said that you wanted to start the farming of shellfish. Had that been going on before you became Constable or did you begin it?

PS: Well, yeah. You know, this is a strange thing. People think that everybody ate shellfish forever. This is not true. Now the Pilgrims came here in 1620. The nonsense about their living on turkey and turnips and cranberries is not so. They would have starved to death without the shellfish, particularly oysters and mussels. But they had taken so many by 1750-- that's a hundred and thirty years-- that the towns had to establish regulations as to when and where and how many and what size oysters you could take, because they had cleaned out the oyster population. Now up to 1900 nobody ate quahogs-- nobody sold quahogs, they ate them undoubtedly.

There was no market for sea clams. Scallops were considered poisonous until 1900. Mussels were not popular until the last ten years.

So shellfish farming-- what's happened is we've got so many people taking shellfish that somebody has got to start to raise them. They can't just depend on what God gave us. If the Pilgrims ran out in a hundred and thirty years, if they ran out of shellfish, what are we supposed to do, with seven thousand people a year shellfishing? We have got to raise more shellfish.

Q: Where are the most popular spots? Salt Pond, I know. You just mentioned that. Six hundred on a Sunday and I can believe it.

PS: The most popular spots are where the shellfish grow naturally. No, that's a thing we could run for hours about. There are areas where shellfish spawn and grow naturally. This is so wherever you go up and down the coast. No, that's not a question I want to try to answer.

Q: Okay. But the big farm is the Salt Pond then?

PS: Well, we've set the Salt Pond up for the non-commercial fishermen and we planted it heavily. We experimented. Partly to let the tourists who came in September get as many shellfish as the tourists who came in June. Partly to take the non-commercial fishermen out of the commercial fishermen's hair. If we could make it more profitable to go in the Salt Pond on Sunday than we could to go in Hemenway's Landing-- or wherever. The west shore-- I know my cousins love the west shore and that's fine, except that when

the eel grass went in 1928, the shellfish went in 1928, and what we've been living on, what few shellfish there are on the west shore are hangovers from that period.

But what we tried to do was make an area so plentiful, so easy to get at, so accessible, that they would stay out of the commercial fishermen's hair and not disrupt their fishing.

Q: When you say we, who do you mean?

PS: Me!

Q: Okay, that's what I thought. So then this was your idea, to make the Salt Pond into a farm?

PS: Well, you have to remember that the picture has changed most radically in the last fifteen years. The former Shellfish Officer's job was to see that people had a license, to see that they didn't take more than the limit the town allowed, see that they didn't take the short stock. Today that is only part of the picture, because today-- where are the people in September going to get enough shellfish, and the town, if they're going to issue licenses, has to do something about it. The Shellfish Officer today is no longer a law enforcement officer, simply that. He has become a salt water farmer. He is raising shellfish for the town, for the populace, for whoever comes and wants shellfish.

Q: Who is enforcing that?

PS: Well, the Shellfish Officer is the law. The Selectmen make the regulations, and after, thank goodness, two or three years,

the Selectmen would listen to me, and so in other towns, and say, okay, the Shellfish Officer is the hired expert. He knows what should be done. We will go along and make the regulations. This right to the towns-- and Massachusetts is unique in that-- was granted to the towns/the right to manage their own shellfish industry was granted to the towns in Massachusetts in 1888. It was not until, however, 1912 that a shellfish law enforcement officer-- called a constable, and still called that; there's no such thing as a shellfish warden-- a shellfish constable in Massachusetts, it wasn't until 1912 that that office became legal within the state.

Q: Did you have a crew working under you?

PS: Not when I started, not really. I had Charlie to supervise the Salt Pond on Sunday, and the rest I did by myself.

Q: Charlie who?

PS: Charlie Campbell. And Charlie is now still working as deputy for Henry Lind, who has taken over my job.

Q: Have you found that most people are honest or do they try to take the little ones?

PS: Yes. No, ninety per cent-- mostly the only law violators-- well, after all, I only went to court once in ten years. And that was a wild case, which is a classic. But, no, mostly people, if they understand what you're trying to do, will abide by the law. No, I found amazing cooperation, both among the local people and among the tourists.

Q: Were you the one to decide then which part of the pond they could use on a certain Sunday? And how did you make that decision?

PS: Yes, pretty much, pretty much. After the first two years or three years, the Selectmen let me handle the thing. They figured they'd hired the expert, and if you hire an expert, then you let him have his head. We had our run-arounds. Sure enough, we had times when the Selectmen and I did not agree. I handed in my badge a half a dozen times in the first two or three years, and they said, now hold on, wait a minute, we'll go along with you.

Yes, the Shellfish Constable today is a farm manager. That's what it amounts to really. When is the crop harvestable? What area should we open? What area should we close? Why should we close it? But the Shellfish Officer today is a farm manager and his bosses-- a corporation, if you're working for private industry, says to the manager, okay, you're managing the farm and if you don't make money,, then you're out, but if you do make money, then we'll raise your pay. I hope.

Q: Have you had a great deal of trouble with red tide in the Salt Pond area?

PS: Oh, my goodness, I could talk about red tide for-- you know what I mean. No, very briefly, red tide, the so-called red tide, is not red. It is caused by a micro-organism called Gonyaulax Tamorensus-- excuse the Latin. It does not affect the shellfish. It is a dino-flagellate eaten by the shellfish. It is harmful only to warm-blooded animals, like seagulls and raccoons

and people, if it is eaten in excess. It is not the same red tide they have in Florida. That is-- again, excuse the expression-- gondominium greve, which kills fish.

Yes, we've had trouble with it, because areas which should have been open necessarily by the State Department of-- used to be Public Health, now it's DEQE. You get me going on this subject and I can talk for the next three hours. No, we've had trouble with it, but it is now being monitored by the state. And it is not a visible thing. You cannot see it. It is not red.

Yes, we've had trouble and apparently the stuff is migrated south'ard. Dr. Anderson at Wood's Hole, who perhaps knows more about it than anybody else in this area, thinks that perhaps in within ten years they will be in Long Island.

Q: And here?

PS: Well, it was moving south-- yes. But it's expanding and nobody's quite sure why. It gets to be a very complicated subject. We could talk about this for, as I say, the next three hours and not cover it. But it is apparently extending down the coast. Canadians have lived with it for thirty years.

Q: How old is this red tide? Has it been going on for centuries or have we just discovered it or what?

PS: Well, that's another one of those, how long is a Chinaman.

Q: Okay. Phil, this sort of leads I think directly into your work with the National Seashore. What exactly do you do for them and

when did you start and how did it come about and so forth?

PS: Well, I was here before the Seashore.

Q: I was going to ask you how you felt about it coming in?

PS: It was the salvation of the town. It was absolutely the salvation of the town. I was chairman of the Conservation Commission for four years and during that time-- this was when we first faced up to wetland exploitation. According to Dr. *Trayser* you have to have an acre of land for a family of four, an acre of green land for a family of four. We live on a fresh water bubble. We have no outside source of fresh water.

Okay. The population of the town, while I was Shellfish Constable, went from twenty-five hundred to thirty-five hundred. The people explosion is ferocious, and if we're going to depend on rain water, which is what we depend on for our fresh water, then we have to have more green land to absorb the water.

Now the Seashore came in and everybody was very much upset about it. I went to both Senate hearings in the Town Hall and it was a rigged deal. You were allowed to speak-- you had to submit five original copies of what you wanted to say. Not carbon copies, not Xerox copies. Five original copies of what you wanted to say, and depending whether you were for or against the Seashore coming in, you were allowed five minutes to speak or twenty minutes to speak. It was a rigged deal. There was no-- I got completely disgusted with the way the thing was set up.

However, I had been deep enough into conservation by that time

to realize that if we do not keep enough green land in Eastham, we are going to be like Key West. They're going to be trucking water in from Vermont or wherever. People talk about piping water in from the Boston system. Boston hasn't got enough water and they're not going to give any water down here.

So allowing that we have to have an acre of green land, which I guess is a reasonable figure, the Seashore took away thirty-six per cent of the taxable property in town, which will never be built on. God willing that they don't change the law.

So Eastham hasn't to worry about the source of water, because the Seashore has closed off better than a third of the town as green land, so that we can get the water.

Now there's a great deal of-- still, after the Seashore's been here so long, there still is a great deal of antipathy, a great deal of resentment against the Seashore taking away a third of our taxable property. But it's the salvation of the town. It's the only thing that will save the town. And it's the only way that we can now say, well, you can have so many houses here and here and here, whether you say half-acre or whatever you say.

Q: That came under Zoning and Planning. Did that follow the Seashore or precede it?

PS: No. I was one of eight members of the original Planning Board, before it was official, and we were distressed because Phil Smith-- that was later Luther Smith's, Selectman's father-- was selling in the Kingsbury Beach-Thumpertown area 40'x50' lots. Forty by fifty feet. As they did in Florida. And we were distressed because we

didn't want another Harwich, another Route 28. We felt that anybody who could only afford a lot of nine thousand square feet was only going to build a shanty, and eight of us got together and formed the first Zoning Board. We bit off more than we knew, because we got into the state control situation. But I think really it was one of the most saving things that was ever done in the town, because we insisted on a twenty thousand square foot lot.

I wish we had known what we know now, and I am sure that we would have gone for a forty thousand square foot lot. However, as I say, we got into state zoning and that sort of thing. So now-- what is it? Twenty thousand square feet with a hundred and thirty-five foot frontage on the road and all kinds of regulations, which have had to be adopted because of state regulations.

Q: Who were the original eight that you talked about? Seven besides you. Do you remember?

PS: I can't tell you all of them. I don't remember. There was myself and Maurice Moore and Maurice Wiley and-- goodness, I just can't go back that far.

Q: That's all right. I just wanted a few names to sort of put it in time and place.

PS: Yes. Well, we brought it up to the surface and brought it to the public's attention, and I can't-- you know, it's so long back that I can't remember. As far as the Seashore coming in, how I got to work for the Seashore, they brought in their best people. They brought in their best naturalists, their best administrator,

their best-- whatever. And these people were very anxious to get to know local people, and I went over and they got to know my name and they would come to me and say, hey, what is the story here? How many shellfish grow there? Who kills deer where? Who cuts down trees in this area? And I got to be kind of the granddaddy of the thing. In fact, I gave one of the very first lectures-- slide lectures-- over where the Coast Guard Station is, on a miserable, cold, foggy, easterly night. The audience took blankets. I have pictures to prove it, a slide lecture on local conditions. And from there on-- oh, my goodness, what was the man's name? Anyway, he came in and they started to hire local people to give lectures.

You know, there's very people who have the expertise, the knowledge, who have the time and who can talk in front of the public. It's not a common trait. And so I have been doing lectures at the Seashore-- what amounts to or has been amounting to forty lectures a summer. There's four lectures a week. I can't remember-- for twelve, fifteen years. It's been a long time.

Q: This is not a volunteer thing?

PS: Oh, no. I got paid for it. Big salary. I haven't got a raise. I put in for a raise last year and they said no, no, this is two and a half years, we can't give you any more money.

Q: That's a big excuse, isn't it? What do you lecture on mostly? I know, but I'd like it for the tape.

PS: Yes. Well, I lecture twice a week, usually Tuesdays and Fridays, the time of day depending on the tide, on

shellfish, and also Tuesdays and Fridays an hour lecture on surf-casting.

Q: And you do this at the Seashore?

PS: At the Seashore.

Q: You don't take them down to the beach?

PS: Take them down to the Salt Pond. And the town is very nice. They cut me up a place about a hundred square feet and they see that there are shellfish there, so that I can dig you a clam and a quahog, and thrust these, after they're open, down the tourists' throats. (LAUGHTER)

Q: You've been doing this now ever since the Seashore-- ?

PS: Practically speaking, ever since the Seashore started, yes.

Q: Do you sell your books over there?

PS: No. I did, but they've had naturalists in there. You see, the books are not sold through the Seashore. They're sold through the Eastern National Park and Monument Association, which is an affiliate, a non-profit affiliate. And depending on who is the interpretative naturalist, they do sell the books.

CAPE COD FISHERMAN "was too expensive". PRACTICAL SHELLFISH FARMING "was a commercial enterprise book". MAKING CANDLES FROM BAYBERRIES, yes, that they sold. The children's book-- CAPE COD CHILDREN, CRITTERS AND BOATS-- yes, they cleaned me out, they sold that.

Some of the books they've sold, some of them they haven't sold. It's a sad thing that they won't, because when they were selling some of the books-- like A REASONABLE CAPE COD LIAR, when they were selling that first-- the girls in the bookstore would say, we know when you've lectured, because people come in by droves to buy your books. But you can't fight-- and I've never made a big thing about, well, they did sell^{the}/books, well, they didn't sell the books.

Q: Which is a good point to come to the books. Now the first one was-- the first book you wrote--

PS: Well, the first book that I wrote or the first book that was published? Well, that was STRIPED BASS AND OTHER CAPE COD FISH.

Q: Okay. And how did that come about? Was it your idea and you sold it to-- ?

PS: Yes, I guess so. I guess so. The Chatham Press picked the thing up. I perhaps know as much about striped bass fishing as any writer on the Cape. Let's put it that way. Not more than any fisherman, any writer. And I felt I had something to give, and I wanted to write. And I wrote the book and Chatham Press picked it up. I think it was a mistake, the way it was handled. I think that it should have been put in hardcover. It never should have been printed in paperback to start with. It sold something like five thousand copies in five weeks. It just-- they couldn't keep copies. But, unfortunately, Chatham Press either went bankrupt or whatever, and they mixed up with--

Q: How did you get hooked up with them?

PS: Well, they mixed up with Viking Press, and, you know, this publishing business is something. I don't know the inside. I still have people who come to me, would I please autograph a copy, and the thing's been out of print for-- what, ten years.

Q: Could you get International Marine to re-publish it?

PS: No, they're now going away from fish books. They want to go into boat-building. I'd like to re-do it. I really would like to re-do it, and I'd like to add chapters to update the book, because there is a great deal that has changed in striped bass fishing and bluefishing.

Q: Did you just wake up one morning and say, I'm going to write a book about striped bass, or what was the incentive, do you remember?

PS: I don't remember. I just don't remember. I like to write. I enjoy writing. The letters that I write run commonly three single-spaced pages. Four single-spaced pages. I can't write a short letter.

Q: Was this while you were charterboat skippering or was it afterwards?

PS: No, it was after. After I was through charterboating.

Q: And after the column?

PS: No, during the column. While I was writing the column for THE CAPE CODDER. The column for THE CAPE CODDER, "It's a Phil Schwind That Blows No Good"-- that's a horrible pun, that's terrible.

Q: But people remember it.

PS: But that started-- that column started as a fluff for the charterboat fleet. I had studied journalism and I had been very aware of the fact that we were not getting a reasonable publicity. And I went up one day to THE CAPE CODDER and I said to Hobbs, hey, your column on the charterboat fleet stinks. The only things that you say are a box score, and nobody reads the box score except the people whose names are misspelled. And he said, if you don't like it, write it yourself.

Well, in a fleet of I think at that time seventeen boats chartering, there are quite often during the week rather strange things that happen and they make good copy. So what I did-- Freddie Harris and I at the time were high boats [a common expression, which means caught the most fish]. There was no question. There was nobody-- we very often, either I or Freddie would catch more fish than the rest of the fleet put together. That was not uncommon at all. And it got to be embarrassing, because my name or Freddie's name was in the paper every week. So I said to Freddie, well, look, I'll only write you one week and I'll write myself another week, and then we will put in the other ones.

But I ran into a great deal of antagonism, because I know what sells newspapers is people's names. And Helen would call Eddie Horton's wife or whoever and say, what was the name of your party today that had such a wonderful catch and how many fish did you catch? And they would say, we're not going to tell you, because you'll write to them and steal the parties away from us. Which was not our intent. My God, I was three weeks booked in advance. I needed more parties like I needed a hole in the head.

along
So, anyway, it got/to be October and the schoolteachers all went back to teaching school and the carpenters went back to building houses and the plumbers went back to plumbing, and there were very few of us left fishing. And I went up to Hobbs and I said, let's knock it off until next April. Well, he said, you've been telling lies for years, why don't you keep on telling lies? And so for thirteen years I was the only professional liar on Cape Cod. I was the only one who got paid for lying. (LAUGHTER)

Q: That's wonderful. Okay, Phil, let's see, the first one was THE STRIPED BASS and that took off and really sold.

PS: Really sold. Like crazy.

Q: Until they ran out of copies?

PS: Until it went out of print, yes.

Q: It went out of print right away?

PS: Yes. They never reprinted it. Well, Chatham Press got in a mess financially and I don't know what the background-- well, they had printed Doris Doane's new book and they had reprinted THE HOUSE ON NAUSET MARSH, Dr. Richardson's book. And all of a sudden, no more books. And Doris had a hell of a time, because Doris's books sold like crazy. It was years before they finally got to reprint Doris's.

Q: Did you tell me-- I've forgotten, I don't think you did-- how you got hooked up with them? Was it through Doris Doane?

PS: It was through my connections with the Seashore. It was one of those mixed-up messes. ~~How do you know who~~
~~you know.~~

Q: Sure. Because Riverside, Connecticut isn't exactly next door, you know. So I just wondered.

PS: No. He was in Chatham. He was in Chatham. Henshaw his name was. He was in Chatham. But he had done Doris's book and he was back and forth to the Seashore, and I met him this way.

Q: Who was your illustrator on that one, remember?

PS: Well, that was a sad thing too, because they hired Bill Quinn to take pictures, and Bill took some beautiful pictures. Really, really. Bill knocked himself out for pictures. We had pictures in the surf, we had pictures-- he hired a boat, took us offshore. We took pictures, and he went alongside, because you can't take pictures from a boat of the fishing. You have to be off to one side. And Henshaw kept coming back and saying, have you more pictures, have you more pictures, have you more pictures? Well, nobody wants to see pictures of dead fish. What people want to see is the action. And Henshaw, instead of using those fantastic pictures that Bill Quinn took, most of the pictures were pictures that we had of dead fish. It was a sad thing, because Bill took a-- I guess Bill still has them, and I've been working on Bill to see if we couldn't get this book republished with Bill's original pictures. They paid Bill for them. It isn't they didn't pay him. They just didn't use them.

Q: I would think it would be very popular again, because there are an awful lot of guys who don't know how to do this and would like to learn.

PS: I have in the summertime at the lectures on surf casting not infrequently-- well, very infrequently-- less than forty people. Not infrequently as many as a hundred and a hundred and twenty people who want to learn how to catch fish in the surf. And I know very well the book would sell, but I can't find a publisher who thinks the way I do.

Q: Well, let's hope you do. Keep at it. What was the next one then, Phil?

PS: With a guy named Frank Hammond in Wiscasset, Maine on worm digging.

(TAPE INTERRUPTION)

Q: Okay, here we go. What were we talking about?

PS: The sequence of the books. I can't tell you. We'll have to go back to the books. Actually, the CLAM SHACK COOKERY, the CLAM SHACK CLAMMER were in self-defense. As a Shellfish Constable, people would come to me and say, how do you cook this? I've got a bucket of shellfish, how do I cook this? And so-- I'm not a cook, Helen is the cook in the family. So I wrote the book really in self-defense. Mostly they were copied from the CAPE CODDER columns and

augmented. For instance, I wrote-- which is not in the books-- I wrote directions on how to knit mittens. Because I knit my own socks, the ones I have on, and my own mittens.

So really we didn't set out to sell books. We set out to protect me as Shellfish Constable, and CLAM SHACK COOKERY was followed by CLAM SHACK CLAMMER, and then they sold so well-- CLAM SHACK COOKERY, we sold-- what? Twenty thousand copies out of this living room. And then CLAM SHACK CLAMMER didn't sell quite as well, but it sold. And then we put out a book, CAPE COD TOOK ME IN. Now these three were later combined into a book, the hardcover CLAM SHACK COOKERY, which I.M. [International Marine Publishing Company] puts out.

And then I have been selling stories, short stories, to GOLDEN MAGAZINE. But, you know, they play musical chairs in the editorship, and the editor, Ms. Dolly Debes, who had bought my stories, got fired and GOLDEN Magazine sold out to Western Publishing or whatever they were, and I had fourteen stories which they didn't buy or return. This is the thing I hate about publishers. If they'd only send the damn stuff back if they don't want it.

And eventually I got it back and I said, well, if they don't want it, I'll make a book. So CAPE COD CHILDREN, CRITTERS AND BOATS was born. And then we had done so well with the books previously, we did REASONABLE CAPE COD LIAR, which did not sell.

Now in the meantime printing costs had gone up.

Q: Were you printing some of these yourself?

PS: Well, paying for them, yes. Charlie Thompson printed them.

I paid for all of these. Well, that means you've got to have a thousand dollars, two thousand dollars, three thousand dollars in cash on the line. And I believe-- I'm no believer in credit cards. I believe in paying as you go. And we always felt we were clear once we had sold enough copies to pay for the printing cost. Anything above that was profit. Now I know that's not good bookkeeping, but this is the way we did it.

REASONABLE CAPE COD LIAR did not sell. Why it did not sell, I do not know.

The bayberry book was another thing. Bob Taylor, who was the naturalist at the National Seashore, wanted me to do the thing. And it sold. Goodness knows, we had it reprinted I don't know how many times.

Q: How did you come to do the REASONABLE CAPE COD LIAR?

PS: Well, we'd been selling books and they'd been going pretty well. And it's not much money, but, you know, it was three hundred, five hundred, a thousand dollars.

Q: But, I mean, where did you get the ideas? Are these really true stories about your grandmother?

PS: Well, yes and no. There were fifty-two stories, many of them traditional Cape Cod lies, or Cape Cod stories.

Q: That you just picked up over the years?

PS: That we picked up over the years. My grandfather used to tell me stories. My grandfather was a good story-teller. I come by it

naturally. And I just felt that many of these stories would be lost if somebody didn't put them on paper.

Q: This was true also of the children's book?

PS: No, the children's book was pretty much all out of my head.

Q: It was?

PS: Yes. Yes. I'm a firm believer in seeing things which other people can't see. I see sea serpents. I see talking sea robins. I see mermaids. Some of my nicest friends. But, you know, it was Rowdy, the Sea Serpent of Pleasant Bay, who told me that if you don't believe, you don't see. Now many people never see Santa Claus. The people who believe in Santa Claus do see Santa Claus, and I'm very serious about this. If you don't believe in these things, then you'll never see them. But if you do believe in them, there comes a time when you're very lucky.

All right, I'm a kook. I'm sorry. I'm a little bit crazy.

(LAUGHTER)

Q: Well, you have a beautiful imagination and those are absolutely charming, those stories.

PS: Well, thank you very much for that.

Q: They really are just great.

PS: I just think that people just don't go beyond bread and butter.

Q: Well, you've written bread and butter books too though.

PS: Oh, yes. CAPE COD FISHERMAN was strictly-- CAPE COD FISHERMAN never started out to be an autobiography. It started out to be a transition of the thirty dollar boat to the three thousand dollar boat. But it just happened that I had lived all that thing, I had done all that thing, so it turned out to be really eventually a kind of autobiography over that thirty-forty year period. Didn't set out to be that.

Q: Then you followed that with MAKING A LIVING ALONGSHORE.

PS: Yes. MAKING A LIVING ALONGSHORE-- I was very lucky, when we came here to the Cape in '34 to run into old Frank Ryder, who was a gentleman. He was one of the gentle people of the world. And he taught me practically all I know about the shore, except a great deal he taught me I had to unlearn, because it wasn't true.

But, I say, the book was written for those young people who came to the Cape during the building boom, and then all of a sudden the building boom drops flat and they haven't got any job, and they went to the shore. Even as we did in '34. Exactly the same situation. You can't make a living anywhere else, but there is always a living along the shore.

And I can see a half a dozen different ways that are not being used today. Why, I could make a living at seventy-four-- I can make a living doing these things that are not being done. So this was

the reason for MAKING A LIVING ALONG THE SHORE. It's for these young people. And I'm awfully sorry I can't get it republished, because I think it should be republished.

Q: Now, International Marine published that?

PS: Yes.

Q: And why can't you get it republished?

PS: I can't talk to them. I've been up there to Maine and I've tried to talk to them about republishing. I've sent off to two other publishers, who say it's a very well organized book. Very well done, I'm sure they would sell it, but unfortunately our list is full for this year.

Q: How did you happen to get hooked up with International Marine?

PS: Well, I tried to sell CAPE COD FISHERMAN to Viking Press. Viking wouldn't have any part of it. And my very good friend, Frank Woolner, who is the editor of THE SALT WATER SPORTSMAN-- to whom I sold a number of-- any number of articles I sold to SALT WATER SPORTSMEN. And Frank said, why don't you try International Marine? They're a young company, they're a new company, and this might be right up their alley. And they gobbled it up.

And amazingly, the same year they published the hardcover of CLAM SHACK COOKERY, which was a combination of CLAM SHACK COOKERY, CLAM SHACK CLAMMER and CAPE COD TOOK ME IN. The same year.

Q: Then along comes PRACTICAL SHELLFISH FARMING. How did that happen?

PS: Well, I hate to brag about it, but I probably know more practical information about shellfish farming, about growing shellfish, than perhaps anybody on the coast. I don't like to sound like I'm bragging, but, you see, while I was working for the town I had to produce more and more and more shellfish. Now I was subsidized by the town. I was smart enough to hire very smart youngsters just out of college with a biology degree, very willing to work, very willing to apply what they knew, and my biological knowledge I acquired from these kids that I hired.

And it's been proven. This thing that I got through the mail today from North Carolina, they copied me.

TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

Q: What would be the market for that? Would it be rather limited?

PS: Well, you might think so, but there has become a great deal of-- necessarily, a great deal of interest in alongshore shellfish farming. And it is used in the University of Maine as a textbook, at Orono. It is used in the University of Rhode Island as a textbook. I have had a great many letters from England, where it is being used, at least if not as a textbook, then as a reference book. But my own feeling is that there are too many scientists who are subsidized by the government and don't have to get their feet wet, or their boots wet. And there are too many people-- as I say, this thing I just got today from North Carolina, point by point, every point that I make on this particular subject, they

have copied. It's fine, it's very flattering, but I'd like to get more credit than I got.

But the nice thing about the shellfish community-- and I speak from Virginia to Maine-- is that they are very, very willing to share whatever they've learned, both their mistakes and their successes. Now, it's a very rare community that will share their mistakes, and I think that this is quite unique among the scientific field.

Q: Well, this is pretty much of a new field then, right?

PS: Wes. Well, it is and it isn't. It is and it isn't. They've been farming shellfish in China for God knows how many centuries, I don't know. They're way behind us. They've been farming shellfish in Japan since at least the Second World War. They're still behind us. Now we are adopting some of their techniques, that's true. We have a very good friend, Dr. Drinkwaard, who is the head of the Dutch mussel industry.

He was with us for five days. We had a wonderful time with him. I think Helen and Els, his wife, were bored stiff, but Dr. Drinkwaard and I had a wonderful time for five days. And at the end of the five days, I said, you've been here, have you learned anything? And he said, yes. He said, you're a little bitty town, thirty-five hundred people-- have diversified more than the entire country of Holland. We have gone out in new fields and I think we're quite well up. But the only

reason we are is that we share, one town to another. I can't imagine going to another town in Massachusetts and saying to the shellfish officer, "Hey, what did you do? How did you get this?" I can't imagine him saying, "I'm not going to tell you." But the scientific community does this continually, "wait until I publish my paper." No, no. Not here. Not here. Not here.

Q: Are you working on another book now, Phil?

PS: Well, I've written two books in the last two winters and neither one could I sell. One was on summer visitors. Nobody wants to hear nasty stories about idiocy. You know, like the man that lost his wheel in the marsh, that sort of thing.

And I wrote one last year, the second one, about my experiences as a charterboatman. And I think it's a good book. I think people would like to know about the experiences that people who hire a boat for sixty-five or a hundred and twenty-five dollars-- I don't know how much money-- what experiences they go through. But I just can't sell it.

Q: Have you ever thought of getting an agent, a literary agent?

PS: Well, yes, I've thought about it, but I don't know anybody who knows anybody who knows anybody. You know, it's one of those things. Remember, this is my winter's recreation. This is not our living. We're too busy living to live off a printed page. If I can sell it, fine. If I can't sell it, well, so I've just had a nice winter beating on the typewriter.

Q: I just want to go back once to town government. Now you were on the Conservation Commission?

PS: Yes.

Q: Did you have to run for that or are you appointed?

PS: No, I blackmailed my way onto that. Well, I felt when I was first Shellfish Constable that the Shellfish Constable and the Tree Warden, possibly the Dog Officer, should be ex officio members of the Conservation Commission.

Q: The Conservation Commission had been established for quite a long time?

PS: Oh, yes. And as a matter of fact they had been inoperative. By state law they have to publish a report every year in the Town Report, which they had not done for five years. So I went to the Selectmen and I said, will you please appoint me to the Conservation Commission the next opening? Oh, yes, they would. And three years in a row they appointed somebody else.

Well, it turned out that the then-chairman of the Conservation Commission didn't like me. So the then-secretary of the Conservation Commission had gone up-- I don't know, somewhere in the middle of Massachusetts-- and the town would not pay her expenses. So she came in this particular day-- I had been talking to the Selectmen about putting me on the Conservation Commission, and she came in, and I said, what are you going-- well, she said, I'm going to resign.

from the Conservation Commission. I said, hold on just a minute. Go across over to Ed Brown and buy yourself a Coke. Give me ten minutes and then come back with your resignation.

So I went in and I said to the Selectmen, would you put me on the next vacancy on the Conservation Commission?

Oh, sure.

I said, will you put that in writing?

Oh, sure.

Will you put down the day and the hour and the minute that you specified that?

You're crazy.

I said, no, will you do that? You've lied to me three years in a row. Now would you do that?

So they, thinking it was very funny, made out this promise to appoint me at the next thing. And I went out and here came Evelyn, and I said go. And she went in and resigned, handed in her resignation. And I went in and I said, "Give!"

Q: What was the reaction?

PS: Oh, boy! Well, the Conservation Commission hadn't met to make any decisive-- they had a five hundred dollar budget and in five years they had spent twelve dollars. And I went to each member of the Commission and I said, now either you're for conservation or you're not. If you are-- as the newest member, I haven't the right to call a meeting, but we could have a rump meeting of the members who are interested in conservation. Now if you're not interested, get the hell off the Commission.

So we had a meeting and somebody had notified the chairman-- I won't mention any names-- and he showed up and the first thing he did was to resign as chairman of the commission, and now the office of chairman of the Conservation Commission was open and they appointed me as chairman.

So it was one of those things where I just bulldozed my way into the thing. I had no right-- probably no legal right.

However, then we passed a resolution which was not legal, because nobody can remove or appoint a commission member except the Selectmen. That anyone who did not attend three consecutive meetings, without a doctor's certificate that he was unable to, would automatically be removed from the commission. And in six months we had a complete new Conservation Commission.

Then we started to move and we really started to move. Now this was before all the wetland rigmarole that we've gone through. I got involved in the wetland thing because I was the one person in this area that the Department of Natural Resources knew. And all of these wet-behind-the-ears punks that came down here, who have now moved upstairs in the hierarchy-- came down here and ate Granny's [Helen's] mince pie, which is the best, and drank my bourbon, which is not bad, and I went around and showed them wetland here, wetland there, wetland here, wetland there, this thing. All for no pay.

We set up the tree planting program, which has been-- I would be very interested to know how many hundred thousand trees that we have planted through the Conservation Commission in town. I see black pines-- every time I see a Japanese black pine growing in town, I think, aha!, there's another one I got planted.

Spruce trees, autumn olive--

Q: This is the program where you allow residents of Eastham to pay a very, very nominal amount--

PS: No pay. It's for free.

Q: And where do you get these trees?

PS: We got them through what was in those days the Department of Agriculture, the Barnstable Conservation District. It's now, I think, the Department of the Interior. It's changed headings. And I was for four years a member of the Barnstable County Soil Conservation District. For no pay. I quit that because I had a bunch of cranberry farmers who would not talk soil conservation unless it was to do with cranberries. I was partly instrumental in stopping the use of DDT on the Cape. We made an awful fuss about that. And the other-- these things. But I couldn't get anywheres with these people, because I felt that salt water wetland was as important as fresh water wetland, and all of the other members on the committee were cranberry farmers.

Well, we reactivated the herring runs, got them operative. I kind of scrounged a little bit, because I would use shellfish deputies, pay them out of shellfish funds to work on the herring runs. We got them operative. We got them really working.

Q: This is the Conservation Commission?

PS: The Conservation Commission. See, I was chairman of the

Conservation Commission as well as Shellfish Officer.

And I went to the town and asked for three thousand dollars for labor for the Conservation Commission, because I was spending more time on conservation than I was on shellfish. I was getting paid for the shellfish, but I wasn't getting paid for the conservation. And the town voted it down.

Q: At a Town Meeting?

PS: At Town Meeting. So that when Henry came along, when it got to be-- the shellfish business got to be so big that it was no longer a part-time job. It was a full-time job. Particularly if you're going to include the Conservation Officer. Now the local thing is-- most of the towns on the Cape now don't appoint a Shellfish Constable, they appoint a Natural Resource Officer.

Q: Same thing.

PS: Which is what we have here. Same work, different name, but this lets them-- .

And I did not want a full-time job. I had too many other things I wanted to do.

Q: When the DEQE came in, were you still on the Conservation Commission?

PS: Yes.

Q: What was your reaction to them?

PS: Well, they came down here-- I could tell you stories about when

they came down. When they came down at first they-- it was '72. And poor Jim Orphanos, who is now, I guess, head of the Lakeville deal, Jim came down here with a long boot and a short boot. Somebody had stolen his long boots and he had a short boot up to here and a long boot up to here, and he had to take samples of the shellfish.

Now I got very uptight about this thing. I went seventeen trips. I got him quahogs, scallops, mussels to check-- this was '72-- to check for red tide. I was using town equipment. I was not being paid for it. He was. And I made a hell of a rumpus about this thing, and I refused to go. I said no. It was a miserable day in December. The wind was blowing, you know, forty miles an hour, and it's raining. So they went without me. I had a hell of a cold, as a matter of fact, at the time and I didn't much want to go out. And they went out and they tried all day long and they couldn't get a scallop.

That was how came the so-called Aylmer Bill, where the state rebates the town budget for the shellfish protection and propagation. I don't know how many days I spent in Boston. At Senate hearings and committee hearings. For no pay. I didn't get paid for it. I think maybe I scrounged out of the town transportation expenses. You know, I went up on the bus and came back this way, but that was all it cost the town.

And I had written an article for the CAPE COD COMPASS on prognosis of next year's shellfish, and I visited every Town Hall on the Cape, every Board of Selectmen, every Shellfish Officer, and the six towns on the Islands. And they paid me an extra hundred dollars for traveling expenses, because I demanded it.

I found I could only do three towns in a day. That was the most I could get done.

And I rode up to Boston to one of the hearings with Senator Aylmer. Bless his heart, I'll love the man forever. And he was horrified that the towns, the twenty-one towns, had spent three hundred and seventy thousand dollars that year for shellfish, and the state's contribution since 1944 had not been over twenty-one thousand dollars, spread among fifty-two towns. He said, it isn't right. So this is how the so-called Aylmer Bill came about and how we're supposed to get matching funds, but we only got-- what, last year? Thirty per cent, I think, matching funds. However, the state is now contributing some. Because we are ~~not~~ doing state work.

So the conservation thing got to be so damn big, I just couldn't afford to do it any more. There were so many hours involved. And now poor Henry spends more time on conservation than he does on shellfish.

Q: When you look back over the years, Phil, who was the Selectman that you think did the best job for the town? Can you name anybody?

PS: Oh, that's an awful thing to ask me. I would say the outstanding Selectmen since we've been in town-- Ralph Chase and Maurice Wiley.

Q: Everybody says Maurice Wiley. He must have been a wonderful man.

PS: Well, it was a kind of a paternalism under both of them, and most everybody went along with them because there wasn't that much

reason to fight them. No, I think Ralph Chase and Maurice Wiley. Wouldn't you say so, Granny?

Helen Schwind: I think they served longer than any of the others. That's one reason.

PS: God knows those men put in more time than they were paid for.

Helen: And more years.

PS: Both of them.

Helen: Some of the others were only one term and they really never got into it.

Q: Yes, I've experienced in these interviews-- a lot of people have said that Maurice Wiley was the most dedicated man.

PS: Well, I think he was. I think he was-- I don't know if dedicated is the word. Involved. But Ralph Chase was too, goodness knows. Yes, Ralph Chase was too, before Maurice. See, when Ralph went out, Maurice came in. No, the two men-- and I'm very proud of the fact that nobody, except for Bob Erickson and *Prince* Hurd, Jr., have ever been accused of graft.

Q: And these people were--

PS: These people were never accused. We didn't have to worry about graft in the town. Really.

Q: There's a man that a lot of stories have been told about-- I think his name was Harvey Moore?

PS: Yes. Well, Harvey was Constable for forty years at fifty dollars a year.

Q: Right. There was a story about his stopping some criminals on the way down from Provincetown. They stopped into his house to ask directions and he arrested them.

PS: Could be. Could be.

HS: I never heard that story.

Q: You never heard that story?

HS: No. It's possible.

(TAPE INTERRUPTION)

Q: I'm going to ask you-- if you had your life to live over again, Phil, would you change anything?

PS: No, absolutely not. Absolutely not. We might have a third child. Maybe that was the one mistake we made, because a family means a great deal to us. No, we're among the very, very few people that you'll ever meet who have always done what they wanted to do.

Q: You're very lucky. You also have an excellent marriage.

PS: I couldn't have done it without that redheaded Virginian, you know. You read the books and you know.

Q: I know. They're all dedicated to her too.

If there's nothing else you want to add at this point, we'll knock it off? Okay?

PS: Okay.

Q: And thank you a million. It's been just great. I've enjoyed it a lot.

PS: I hope I don't confuse a lot of new people.

Q: I think you have given a lot of good, good information. Okay, thanks, Phil.

(TAPE INTERRUPTION)

Q: We're back on again. We've discovered a lot of things we haven't talked about. The Volunteer Fire Department you started?

PS: Bud Rich-- Albion Rich-- and Frankie Fuller came around here. This is before-- or just the beginning of World War Two. Before we were really involved, before the draft started.

And we were at that time hiring the Orleans Fire Department for seventy-five dollars a fire. But unfortunately, when Eastham had a fire, it seemed like Orleans always had a fire, and naturally, being the Orleans Fire Department, they went to their own fire first. And Nate Clark said he thought we shouldn't have a Fire Department, because nobody ever got burned out in Eastham that wasn't better off afterwards than they were before.

However, Frankie and Bud and I started a movement for a Volunteer Firemen's Association. And the town turned us down at our first meeting, our first Town Meeting. We could have bought a new La France machine for five thousand dollars. And we kind of kept-- I was rejected as a cripple. I was three weeks from being over-age when I was drafted, and I had sciatica so badly I couldn't stand up straight. So they rejected me.

So a few of us old crocks kept the Fire Department going during the war. George Howard, Nate Nickerson-- old Nate-- Al Stowell, the Reverend-- what was the minister's name down in North Eastham?

HS: Arnold.

PS: Arnold. Reverend Arnold. Myself. There were a few of us kept the thing going during the war. Kept the association going. And as a result of it, this is what we have now with the Firemen's Association.

So I was instrumental in initiating that.

As I said, I was instrumental in starting the first Zoning Committee. I was one of eight members on that.

During the Second World War we had a teenage daughter that we didn't-- transportation, people forget today that transportation-- I think one of our troubles is the facility, the ease of transportation. We were limited. We were gas-rationed. And we didn't want our daughter wandering around the street. And we had God knows how many hundred horny boys down in Camp Wellfleet, and a teenage girl was quite susceptible to this sort of thing. So we started a Civic Center at the Town Hall, and Helen and I and Leslie and Mabel Chase

kept that thing going for two years. And we had Ping-Pong
we had
tournaments and/Shuffleboard tournaments and we borrowed records
and we had a dance, and we asked people to help, and the trouble
is that the people whose children were there were perfectly willing
to give a couple of dozen cookies or a half a dozen bottles of Coke,
but no time. They didn't have time to do it.

HS: Maurice Wiley--

PS: Maurice Wiley was another one. Well, he was not one of the
backers. It was Mabel and Leslie and you and I that kept the
thing going.

HS: Mrs. Chase was the one who cracked the whip and see that we
came up every Saturday night for two years.

Q: This was once a week then?

HS: Yes.

PS: Yes, once a week. At the old Town Hall. This was before the
new Town Hall was built. You know, the addition that's on there.

Q: Who came?

PS: We had people from all over Cape Cod. We had kids-- what, a
a
hundred and forty? As many as/hundred and forty kids.

HS: More than that.

Q: Were they well behaved or did you have problems?

PS: We had very little problems, very little problems.

MS: Eleanor Lund from Orleans helped us a great deal.
She played the piano and she and her husband came. Carl.
Every week.

PS: Johnny and Beady Ullmann and Harrison weren't married, so
it doesn't matter as far as they're concerned. But they contributed.
They went up there.

We had kids from Harwich, Provincetown. There was no other
place for young people to go. But discipline-wise, no. We had
very little trouble. We had one or two nights when the kids had
got too much to drink.

I've always been quite kaposetic with teenage kids. I can
talk their language. I was a teenager once and I haven't forgotten,
you know. And so there never was any real trouble. Not really.

Q: How long did this go on?

PS: It went on for two years.

Q: Till after the war?

PS: Yes. It went on for two years, and it was, I think-- you see,
the trouble is that people are willing to give money, they're
willing to give cookies, but-- time. Nobody wants to spoil their
evening by going up to the Town Hall and watching somebody else's
kids behave or misbehave.

Q: Things haven't changed much.

PS: No. No. No.

MS: But Dot Clark was one of the ones who was very faithful.

PS: Henry Clark's wife.

Q: I could ask you, I suppose, although it's unnecessary really, and that is how has Eastham changed since '34 when you came?

PS: Just more people.

Q: It's still a kind of a rural--

PS: I hope it stays that way. I hope it stays that way. And I think all this business about changing the town charter and hiring an executive-- my God, aren't there enough examples of town executives? Who have failed? Isn't this enough proof? How many times do you have to be kicked in the pants before you realize somebody's mad at you? (LAUGHTER) You know, this sort of thing.

No, I know the Selectmen are not perfect. Who the hell is? I think that we have been very lucky with a bunch of very conscientious people, who are doing the best they know. And if they don't get full cooperation from the town, then who's to blame them?

Q: Well, the whole character of the town probably would change if we had a manager?

PS: Oh, it would have to. It would have to.

MS: George was a very good Selectman, Phil.

PS: Yes, George Howard was a Selectman. George was president of the Firemen's Association, and we had a baseball team. Not softball, but baseball team. And George thought that he should resign, because he didn't feel that we should play baseball on Sunday. Now really. That's the kind of conscientious people we've had. And while I may not agree with George, you can't fault him for his convictions. You know?

And I can go back over the Selectmen we've had over the many, many, many years, and I'm sure some of them have been crooks. We've had a couple of crooks in town, but for the most part they have been dedicated people. Goodness knows why anybody wants to be Selectman. Of course, I've run three times, and I think my total vote in three attempts at Selectman was a hundred votes. Over three times. But that's all right. I have a way of irritating people. I don't hold it against people that didn't vote for me. (LAUGHTER)

Q: When was this, Phil? When did you run?

PS: Oh, I don't remember what year it was.

Q: It was quite a long time ago?

PS: Yes. I got very irritated the way the town was run and I thought that things should be different. There was too damn much welfare. There was too damn much giveaway programs, and I've always been against that. And I abhorred the day-- and I've been in print in the paper about hating to be in the "gimme" generation. The old people-- gimme this, gimme that, gimme the other thing, I don't approve of it. I think you should earn what you get.

Q: If you can.

PS: Well-- who can't?

Q: I suppose an old cripple maybe. Somebody who's in his eighties.

PS: Oh, come on now. Freddie Harris, who shot off his hand when he was in high school. He had a stump below his left elbow, and Freddie Harris was probably-- if not the best, the second best, I'll put myself at the top-- fisherman in Cape Cod Bay. He could run a thirty-five foot boat, handle a party, hook fish, gaff the fish in and handle fish himself. He got when he was-- what? Fifty, fifty-five. He got a pilot's license ~~to drive~~, to fly. Come on. People that are a little bit crippled. Sure, aren't we all crippled?

Q: This you had in the CAPE COD FISHERMAN, I think.

HS: I think we did, yes.

PS: Aren't we all crippled a little bit one way or another?

Q: Sure. I suppose so. You feel very strongly about this.

PS: No, I can't cry for crippled people, I can't, because I've known too many people who were one-legged or one-armed or handicapped, with family in back of them, who have-- I can tell you about people in this town who have done very, very well, who started off very, very poorly. With a very bad background. I'm not going to mention any names, but this is true. I think it's also beautiful that the town has never penalized these people because of their background. I think that's a very big thing.

Q: In other words, Eastham is a very tolerant community?

PS: Yes. It always has been. I hope it stays that way.

Q: We've found it that way too.

PS: Yes, I think so. Most of the people are willing to live and let live.

Q: And it's not stratified?

PS: No. We've run into caste systems which I wouldn't have believed. Here, even if you don't keep your nose clean. I had a case recently, which I'm not going to go into, of a man who in ordinary circumstances would have been an outcast. But he's accepted. I accept him in my house. I can think of other environments, where I wouldn't have him come in the yard.

No, I think the town is very tolerant. Maybe this is where the individual comes in. ~~This is maybe the~~

Q: One of the last outposts?

PS: Well, I don't know. I hope not.

(LAUGHTER)

Q: I do to. Well, thanks again, Phil. We may be back, who knows?